



MONTANA
WIC
PROGRAM

FARM DIRECT HANDBOOK



Montana WIC Program
Department of Public Health & Human Services
1400 Broadway, Cogswell Bldg C305
PO Box 202951
Helena MT 59620-2951
Phone: 1-800-433-4298 or (406)444-5533
Fax: (406)444-0239
www.wic.mt.gov

Local WIC Agency

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Application & Agreement	5
Authorization & Selection Criteria	6
Benefit – FVB & FMNP	8
Complaints	16
Correction Errors Before Deposit	10
Definitions	4
Eligible Fresh Fruits & Vegetables Food List	7
Ending the Agreement	10
Fair Hearings	15
Farm Direct Sign	6
Introduction to WIC	3
Missing Signature Form	17
Monitoring	12
Overview of the WIC Transaction	9
Rejected Benefits & Reduced Payment	9
Stamp	6
Transaction Policies & Procedures	9
Violations & Sanctions	13
WIC ID Packet	8

Farm Direct Handbook

This Handbook applies to all Farmers authorized with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (Department) to participate in the WIC Farm Direct Program in Montana. These procedures should be reviewed before a Farmer signs an agreement to participate in the Farm Direct Program. The authorized Farmer must comply with procedures outlined in this handbook to retain agreement authorization.

To be an authorized Farmer and participate in the Farm Direct Program, the applicant must meet the selection criteria, and have a fully executed authorization agreement with the Department.

WIC Program Overview

WIC, (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), is a nutrition program for women, infants and children. The U.S. Congress established WIC in 1972 in recognition of the need for adequate nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood, especially among limited income families. The Montana WIC Program provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support, supplemental foods, and referrals for health services to more than 20,000 individuals per month.

WIC services are available to women who are pregnant or who recently had a baby, infants and children up to the age of five. Participants must meet income eligibility criteria (less than 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines), must be a resident of Montana, and be determined as having a nutrition need.

A Fruit & Vegetable Benefit (FVB) is a type of food benefit issued to some WIC participants for the purchase of fruits and vegetables. Unlike prescribed WIC food benefits, the WIC participant may purchase eligible fresh and /or frozen fruits and vegetables which meet WIC guidelines. FVBs are issued in increments of \$6.00, \$10.00, and \$15.00 based on the value of benefits the participant is authorized to receive.

Montana WIC Farm Direct Program

The Farm Direct Program is a state-administered federal nutrition program that authorizes Farmers to accept WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program Benefits (FMNP) and WIC Fruit & Vegetable Benefits (FVB).

Participating in the Farm Direct Program provides Farmers with additional sales opportunities and promotes the production of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

WIC participants shopping with authorized Farmers have a large array of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables to choose from, which may help reduce some of the barriers to a healthy diet that many low income families experience.

Definitions

Farmer - An individual authorized to sell locally grown produce at farmers' markets and/or roadside stands. Individuals, who sell produce grown by someone else, such as a wholesale distributor, cannot be authorized.

Eligible Foods - Fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables as listed on the Farm Direct Food List.

Locally Grown - Produce grown only within Montana borders, or counties adjacent to Montana borders where the farmer is selling the produce.

Selection Criteria

The Department establishes and periodically reviews criteria for the selection of Farmer applicants to whom agreements, authorizing the transaction and redemption of WIC benefits, are awarded. The Department shall ensure that an appropriate number of Farmers will be authorized. The Farmer must comply with the Farmer selection criteria throughout the agreement period. The Department may reassess the Farmer at any time during the agreement period using the selection criteria in effect at the time of reassessment. The Department will terminate the agreement if the Farmer fails to comply with the current Farmer selection criteria.

Farmer selection will be based upon consideration of the following:

1. The Farmer must participate in annual face-to-face training every year of the agreement. The Department or its liaison will perform the face-to-face training.
2. The Farmer must grow Farm Direct approved fruits and vegetables him/herself and may sell only locally grown produce as part of their Farm Direct participation.
3. The Farmer may sell produce not self-grown, if at the beginning of each day, at least sixty (60) percent of the total volume of produce displayed and offered at the point of sale has been grown by the authorized Farmer. Farmers selling only produce grown by others shall not be authorized to accept WIC benefits.
4. Farmers are not allowed to operate another farmer's booth/stall/stand or booth space.
5. The Farmer will agree to sell only the eligible, locally grown foods in exchange for Montana WIC benefits.
6. The Farmer will assure that no conflict of interest exists between the Farmer and Montana WIC.
7. The Farmer will agree to comply with civil rights requirements as stated in 7 CFR 248.10(a)(6) and 248.7(a): title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section

504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Department of Agriculture regulation on nondiscrimination (7 CFR parts 15, 15a and 15b), and applicable FNS Instructions to ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability, be excluded from participating as a farmer or customer.

8. The Department will not authorize any Farmer applicant if during the last six (6) years the Farmer applicant has been convicted of, or had a civil judgment entered against them for any activity indicating a lack of business integrity. The Department's determination of lack of business integrity includes but is not limited to: fraud, embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, receiving stolen property, making false claims, or obstruction of justice.
9. Farmers shall have and maintain a positive compliance history with any and all USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) programs in which they are or have participated.

Application & Agreement

The Department has a three (3) year agreement directly with Farmers. This agreement may be terminated within fifteen (15) days of written notice.

1. The Farmer must submit a completed application for authorization.
2. The Farmer must meet the selection criteria published in this Farm Direct Handbook including any revisions to the selection criteria that occur during the agreement period.
3. The Farmer must participate in annual face-to-face training every year of the agreement.
4. The Farmer shall not accept WIC benefits until the Farmer has been notified that the agreement has been fully executed by the Department.
5. The authorized Farmer will receive a Farm Direct ID stamp and sign. The sign must be displayed at all points of sale, every time the Farmer is selling produce in exchange for WIC benefits. The ID stamp must be imprinted on all redeemed WIC benefits before they are submitted to the bank.
6. If the agreement expires without subsequent authorization, the farmer must return the Farm Direct ID stamp to the Montana WIC Program.
7. In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, WIC is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication and Compliance, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice & TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider.

Farm Direct Sign



We gladly accept the following:



SFMNP Coupons

For purchase of unprocessed fruits, vegetables, and herbs grown in MT



WIC FMNP Benefits

For purchase of unprocessed fruits and vegetables grown in MT



WIC Fruit and Vegetable Benefits

For purchase of unprocessed fruits and vegetables grown in MT



EBT Tokens

Farmers Market EBT tokens can be used to buy:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Other foods for human consumption
- Plants and seeds that produce food for human consumption



SFMNP, WIC and EBT are Equal Opportunity Programs and Providers

Stamp

Each Farmer is assigned and issued a unique four digit identification number and ID rubber stamp. WIC stamps will be provided to Farmers at no cost. No Farmer should use a stamp not issued by the WIC Program.

Each WIC benefit accepted at a store must have the identification number stamped on it before being deposited at the bank.

As a result of the federal law "Check 21", all WIC benefits are processed using electronic images. This means when WIC benefits are deposited, an electronic image of the benefit is sent to the WIC bank for processing. Farmer stamps should be a solid impression of the stamp as the numbers link you to the benefit. Sometimes benefits are rejected due to illegible stamps, but the stamp imprint was clear on the original benefit. This is likely due to the fact that image quality is poor. You can also work with your bank to ensure that the images it creates are as clear as possible.

Eligible Fresh Fruits & Fresh Vegetables

Approved foods are locally grown, fresh, unprepared fruits and vegetables.

Fresh Vegetables

Asparagus	Garlic	Rhubarb
Beans, green, long or waxed	Kale	Rutabagas
Beets	Kohlrabi	Spinach
Broccoli	Leeks	Squash-
Brussels Sprouts	Lettuce	summer & winter
Cabbage	Mushrooms	varieties
Carrots	Mustard Greens	Sweet potatoes
Cauliflower	Okra	Swiss Chard
Celery	Onions	Tender Greens -
Chinese Cabbage	Parsnips	similar to lettuce
Collard Greens	Peas	Tomatoes
Corn	Peppers	Turnips/Turnip Greens
Cucumbers	Pumpkins	Watercress
Eggplant	Radishes/Horseradishes	Zucchini

Fresh Fruits

Apples	Chokecherries	Peaches
Apricots	Currants	Pears
Blackberries	Gooseberries	Plums
Blueberries	Grapes	Raspberries
Cantaloupe	Huckleberries	Strawberries
Casaba Melons	Melons	Watermelons
Cherries	Nectarines	

Items that may not be purchased with WIC FMNP or WIC Fruit & Vegetable Benefit Any processed produce or non foods items, including:

Baked Goods	Fresh Herbs	Plants (herb or vegetable)
Cheese	Honey	Potatoes
Crafts	Juices	
Eggs	Nuts	

WIC Fruit & Vegetable Benefit (FVB)

The Fruit & Vegetable Benefits are for a fixed dollar amount (\$6, \$10 or \$15) as stated on the front of the benefit. **The WIC participant CANNOT pay the difference above the maximum amount stated on the Fruit & Vegetable Benefit.** If the total cost of the fruit and vegetables that were selected for purchase with a WIC benefit exceeds the maximum amount on the Fruit & Vegetable Benefit, the WIC participant may choose to remove an item from the transaction or choose a less expensive item. The WIC customer may choose to purchase the “extra” food items in a separate personal transaction using their family food dollars. FVB’s and FNMP Benefits need to be redeemed in separate transactions.

MONTANA WIC PROGRAM DO NOT WRITE DATE OF PURCHASE		MONTANA DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES WIC ENCOURAGES BREASTFEEDING		ACT # 00000 12/01	
CLIENT ID	WIC ID	PARTICIPANT NAME		PRINT DAY TO USE	
		MONTANA RETAILER NUMBER		DATE USED	
				LATEST USE	
				RETAILER	
				COUNCIL	
				AMOUNT OF SALE	
				RETAILER SIGNATURE	
				SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT OR AUTHORIZED PROXY	
\$6.00 Fresh Fruit and/or Fresh Vegetable frozen ve RETAILER - DO NOT ACCEPT UNLESS YOU HAVE A MONTANA WIC CONTRACT PROVIDED THROUGH FVB/C as evidence of delivery (DATE USED, STORE NAME, MONTANA WIC)					

WIC ID Packet

WIC benefits must always be accompanied by a WIC ID Packet. The front of the WIC ID Packet shows the names of who can cash the benefit. One of the signatures on the WIC ID Packet must match the signature on the bottom right of the benefit. Sometimes a person other than a parent or guardian may be authorized to sign the benefit. Such a person is referred to as a proxy and that person's signature will be on the WIC ID Packet. A participant may have two proxies.

Montana WIC Identification Packet Group No. _____ Bring this packet with you to every WIC appointment and each time you shop with WIC checks.	
Authorized Participant Signature _____	
Authorized Proxy Signature _____	
Authorized Proxy Signature _____	
Participant Name _____	Member # _____
Participant Name _____	Member # _____
Participant Name _____	Member # _____
Participant Name _____	Member # _____
Participant Name _____	Member # _____
The goal of WIC is to improve the health of women and children by providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health screenings • nutrition education • breastfeeding information and support • nutrition counseling with registered dietitians • nutritious supplemental foods • referral to health care and other helpful services 	

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Benefits

MONTANA DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES Farm Direct - WIC FMNP - 100000 Building, Helena MT 59601		ACCOUNT #00000 TO: 125 1240 1000	
6/15/10	9/30/10	STAMP AUTHORIZED MARKET MASTER NUMBER HERE	STAMP AUTHORIZED MARKET MASTER NUMBER HERE
2010 NOT REDEEMABLE IN GROCERY STORES		CASHED AMOUNT	
Up to Six Dollars and no/100		TOTALS	
SOLUTRAN Good for the purchase of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables from an authorized Farm Direct farmer. Any other user constitutes fraud.		SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT OR AUTHORIZED PROXY	

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Benefits have a maximum value of \$6 which cannot be exceeded. **The WIC participant CANNOT pay the difference above the maximum amount stated on the FMNP Benefit.** FMNP Benefits and FVB's

need to be redeemed in separate transactions.

Transaction Policies and Procedures

1. Under no circumstances may WIC benefits be exchanged for cash.
2. If the “Amount of Sale” exceeds the maximum value of the benefit, please assist the WIC participant in selecting items to remove from the transaction. **No cash may be exchanged and no change may be given.**
3. The Farmer will clearly identify and separate produce which is not eligible to be paid for with WIC benefits.
4. Non-approved locally grown foods (for example potatoes and herbs) must be grouped separately, from Farm Direct approved produce. The Farm Direct sign must be displayed with the eligible foods, so WIC participants can easily see which foods may or may not be purchased with the WIC benefits.
5. The Farmer or his/her employee need to be physically present and operating their own booth/stall/stand. A Farmer may NOT accept WIC benefits and/or operate a booth/stall/stand for a Farmer not physically present.



Overview of the WIC Transaction

It is important that the Farmer understands and follows the correct WIC benefit cashing procedures. The following guidelines must be observed when handling WIC benefits:

1. The customer should **separate WIC purchases by benefit type.** (Purchases made with Fruit & Vegetable Benefits (FVB) need to be separate from those made with Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Benefits.)
2. **Ask to see the Montana WIC ID Packet**
 - ⇒ DO NOT ACCEPT any WIC benefits without a Montana WIC ID Packet.
 - ⇒ Hold onto the packet so the signatures can be compared at the end of the transaction.

3. **Check the dates.** FVB's & FMNP Benefits cannot be used before the "First Day To Use" or after the "Last Day To Use." Enter the date of use. *Remember: You will not be reimbursed for benefits accepted outside of the use dates.*
4. Make sure the fruits & vegetables being purchased are listed on the Eligible Fresh Fruits & Fresh Vegetables Food List.
5. **Total the purchase. Enter the Actual Amount of the Sale.**
 - ⇒ If the benefit total is written over or entered incorrectly, put one line through the amount and write the correct amount in the correction box and have the participant initial the change.
 - ⇒ The total of the WIC Benefit may not exceed the maximum value printed of the benefit. Enter the actual amount of the purchase in the amount of sale box.
8. **Ask the WIC participant to sign the benefit.** Compare the signature on the WIC benefit with the signature on the WIC ID Packet. ***If the participant's signature is not on the ID Packet, do not accept the benefit.***
9. Return the ID Packet.
10. **Review the benefit for accuracy, valid date range and a signature before deposit.**
 - ⇒ Stamp the benefit with the Farm Direct ID stamp using a black ink pad. The stamp image must be legible.
 - ⇒ Check the purchase price to ensure the total is accurate and legible.

Correcting Benefit Errors Before Deposit

It is recommended that the WIC benefits be reviewed for redemption errors prior to submission to your bank.

The following errors can be corrected before deposit:

- ⇒ If the purchase price is **unclear or not legible**, use a black pen to correct the price. To make a correction that is equal to or less than the original amount, place a single line through the price and write the corrected price in the correction box and initial the change. Deposit to the bank.
- ⇒ If a mistake is made or a food item is added during the transaction and the **adjusted price is higher** than the original price, submit the benefit and a copy of the transaction receipt to the State WIC Office for review and approval **before** depositing the benefit to the bank.
- ⇒ If the WIC participant or proxy **signature is missing**, call the Local WIC Agency and request that **they** contact the participant and have them return to the point of sale to sign the WIC benefit. Document this contact with the "Missing Signature" form (page 17). After the participant returns and signs

the benefit, deposit to the bank. If the participant does not return within ten days, submit the benefit and documentation to the State WIC office for review. Benefits deposited without a signature will be rejected and are not eligible for review or redeposit.

- ⇒ Check to be sure the stamp has been placed legibly in the stamp box.
- ⇒ Benefits deposited without a signature, redeemed before the “First Day to Use” or after the “Last Day to Use”, or with the purchase price missing will be rejected from the bank and are not eligible for State review or redeposit.
- ⇒ Call the State WIC Office at (406) 444-4746, with any questions regarding benefit redemption.

Rejected Benefits & Reduced Payment

Where do WIC benefits go after they are cashed and deposited with your bank? The benefit is processed through the Federal Reserve System and is presented to WIC’s financial intermediary.

Because of federal Check 21 regulations, banks have the option of returning a legal electronic copy of the WIC benefit, called an IRD, rather than the original when returning a rejected WIC benefit. This legal copy is about 2/3 the original size and may be used the same as the original. The bank will stamp the reason for the rejection on the front of the WIC benefit.

The financial intermediary performs a “pre-edit” on each WIC benefit to determine whether or not it meets WIC’s requirements for payment. If a benefit does not pass this “pre-edit” test it will not be paid. It will be returned to your depository bank with a stamp indicating why it was not paid. Your bank will return the benefit to you and may charge you a fee.

The bank evaluates the benefits for various items. For example:

- Whether the food benefit has a valid Farm Direct stamp with a legible Farmer number and date of transaction;
- Whether the date of transaction is between the first and last days to use;
- Whether the WIC benefit has an authorized signature in the proper box;
- Whether the benefit has a total amount written in the “Amount of Sale” box;
- Whether the total exceeds the maximum reimbursable amount; and
- Whether the food benefit was deposited to the bank within 30 days of the “Last Day to Use”.

The Farmer CANNOT contact the WIC participant either to correct a WIC benefit problem or require payment from the WIC participant because a WIC food benefit has been or will be rejected.

WIC benefits redeemed prior to the “First Day to Use” or after the “Last Day to Use”, sent to the bank more than 30 days after the “Last Day to Use”, missing the total amount in the “Amount of Sale” box, or deposited without a WIC participant signature will not be paid or accepted for review and validation.

If the WIC benefit was rejected because of a “Missing Retailer Stamp” ONLY, the Farmer may stamp the front of the WIC benefit or the legal copy of the WIC benefit and resubmit it to the bank without sending it to the State office for validation.

WIC benefits rejected for “Adjusted \$ Amount” or “Over Max \$” must be submitted to the State WIC office for review, possible adjustment and approval or void validation.

Farmers are not allowed to make any alterations to the original printing on the WIC benefit. Doing so is a violation and may cause a sanction to be assigned to the farmer.

Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the regular review of authorized Farmers to determine adherence to Program policies and procedures and to identify specific areas that are found to be deficient during the review.

The monitor conducting the review will check to see that:

- The Farm Direct sign is posted.
- No barriers to service exist.
- Redemption procedures are being followed.
- Non-discrimination guidelines are being followed.
- The Farmer is selling locally grown, eligible fresh fruits & vegetables.
- Prices for eligible WIC produce are posted.

The monitor may perform a covert purchase with WIC benefits to determine where potential weaknesses lie. This means the monitor may shop in your point of sale pretending to be a WIC participant.

During a monitoring visit a Farmer must provide access to negotiated WIC benefits and price records upon request.

Any violation of WIC regulations will be documented on the monitoring form. The form will be discussed with the retailer and he/she will be asked to sign the form. The form will outline steps necessary to correct deficiencies found during the visit. Some deficiencies may result in a warning letter, corrective action plan, mandatory training or disqualification.

Violations & Sanctions

1. Violation of WIC Farm Direct policies and procedures by an authorized Farmer will be identified as class I, II, or III violation. The Montana WIC Program will issue sanctions to the Farmer who violates the Federal Regulations or the terms of this contract by doing any of the following:

Class I Violations

- ◆ Failing to post or display the Farm Direct sign.
- ◆ Accepting WIC benefits outside the valid dates.
- ◆ Accepting WIC benefits for produce which is not grown in Montana or counties outside but adjacent to Montana.
- ◆ Failing to clearly identify and separate produce which is not eligible to be paid for with WIC benefits.
- ◆ Charging a sales tax or fee for produce purchased with WIC benefits.
- ◆ Seeking restitution from a WIC participant or proxy for a WIC benefit not reimbursed.

Class II Violations

- ◆ Giving or accepting change or issuing a rain check to a WIC customer.
- ◆ Exchanging WIC benefits for cash, either for a customer or any unauthorized source, including WIC benefits that were accepted by an unauthorized, suspended or disqualified Farmer.
- ◆ Accepting WIC benefits, or indicating a willingness to accept WIC benefits by posting a Farm Direct sign, when the Farmer is not currently authorized to participate.
- ◆ Discriminating against WIC customers either by treatment, service or price charged for produce.
- ◆ Failure to abide by the minimum required amount of self-grown produce.

Class III Violations

- ◆ Discriminating against a WIC customer based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability (Federal Civil Rights);
- ◆ Not allowing the WIC Farm Direct liaison or another WIC designated official to perform monitoring for compliance with Farm Direct requirements.
- ◆ Knowingly providing false information or claiming a false status (actually a wholesaler or not a grower of locally grown produce) to the Montana WIC Program to obtain a Farm Direct Agreement.

The first offense of a:

- Class I Violation will result in a written warning;
- Class II Violation will result in a 15 day suspension from the postmark date of the written warning; and
- Class III Violation will result in disqualification beginning 15 days from date of receipt of written notice and which will

remain in effect for the remainder of the current market season and the following season.

The second offense of a:

- Class I Violation will result in a 15 day suspension from the postmark date of the written warning;
 - Class II Violation will result in a disqualification beginning 15 days from date of receipt of written notice and which will remain in effect for the remainder of the current market season and the following season; and
 - Class III Violation will result in permanent disqualification from the Montana WIC Farm Direct Program beginning 15 days from date of receipt of written notice.
2. The Farmer may be prosecuted for fraud or abuse under applicable federal, state, or local laws. The penalty or fine for misuse or illegal use of program funds, property or assets of a value equal to or greater than \$100 shall not exceed \$25,000 or imprisonment for not more than five years, or both. If the value of FMNP funds, property or assets which is misused or illegally used is of less than \$100, the penalty or fine shall not exceed more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.
 3. Neither the Montana WIC Program nor the Farmer has an obligation to renew this Agreement. Either the Montana WIC Program or the Farmer may terminate this Agreement for cause after providing the other party 15 (fifteen) days advance written notification. The Montana WIC Program may terminate this Agreement if the Farmer does not comply with this Agreement or the Farm Direct abuse and sanction policy, FNS Interim Regulations, or any other applicable federal, state or local civil or criminal laws, including state and federal nondiscrimination law.
 4. The Farmer may appeal through the fair hearing process any denial of application, sanctioning or disqualification. The Farmer may not appeal a termination due to expiration of the contract or claims actions under section 248.20 of the Federal Regulation.
 5. This Agreement is not assignable or transferable.
 6. Signing of this Agreement signifies training has been completed and the Farmer, Local WIC Agency and the Montana WIC Program are aware of all responsibilities required to participate in the Farm Direct Program.
 7. The Farmer is accountable for the actions of employees and volunteers in the provision of foods and activities.

Fair Hearings

A Farmer may request a Fair Hearing to appeal a denial of application, sanctioning or disqualification. All requested fair hearings will be conducted by Montana WIC within three weeks of the date the Program receives the request for a hearing. The following procedure will be followed:

1. The Farmer has sixty (60) days from the date of the denial of application, sanctioning or disqualification to request a fair hearing. The request may be made through the WIC Farm Direct Liaison or the Montana WIC State Office. The request for a fair hearing may be written or verbal.
2. The Montana WIC Program will set the hearing date within three weeks of the receipt of the request.
3. The Farmer will be notified in writing within a minimum of ten days in advance of the time and place of the hearing.
4. The fair hearing will be held in the county of residence of the Farmer.
5. The fair hearing will be conducted by a fair and impartial official according to 248.16 and applicable portions of Title 2, Chapter 4 Montana Code Annotated, whose decision will rest solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and statutory and regulatory provisions governing the Farm Direct Program in Montana.
6. The Farmer will have the opportunity to:
 - a. review the case file;
 - b. representation by legal counsel;
 - c. confront and cross-examine any witnesses;
 - d. present his/her case; and
 - e. reschedule the hearing date once upon request.
7. The Farmer will be notified of the decision in writing within forty-five (45) days of the original request.
8. The Farmer may appeal the fair hearing decision in District Court in the First Judicial District of the State of Montana, in and for the County of Lewis and Clark within thirty (30) days of receiving the written decision.
9. Expiration of an agreement with a Farmer and claims actions under Section 248.20 are not subject to appeal.
10. An adverse action may, at the State Agency's option, be postponed until a decision in the appeal is rendered.

Complaints Against WIC Participants

On occasion, a Montana WIC participant may violate WIC Program requirements. If the Farmer cannot resolve the conflict by informing the participant of the proper WIC procedures, then the Farmer needs to report the incident on a *Participant Complaint Form*. Please complete the form with all relevant information. If possible provide the participant's name and ID number and as many details of the incident as possible as this will aid in the discussion with the participant at the clinic. WIC participants are not permitted to cause a disturbance at your point of sale, abuse your employees or violate the procedures for redeeming benefits.

When to Report a Complaint or Violation

Many Farmers do not like reporting WIC participants because they feel they will lose a customer. However, once a Farmer allows the inappropriate behavior, that behavior will likely continue. When in doubt about how to report or what to report, the retailer should contact their WIC Farm Direct liaison or the State WIC Agency at 1-800-433-4298.

WIC Participant Violations

Any one of the following constitutes a violation of the WIC Program.

If the WIC participant:

- Redeemed a WIC benefit outside authorized dates or attempted transaction of WIC benefits with unauthorized retailers;
- Altered the WIC benefit in any way including intentionally utilizing false signatures, or proxy signatures;
- Attempted to redeem, received or purchased ineligible produce, or more WIC produce than authorized;
- Verbally or physically abused or threatened physical abuse of farm staff;
- Exchanged a WIC benefit for cash, credit, or non-food items, including produce in excess of the maximum value printed on the WIC participant's benefit; or
- Intentionally making false or misleading statements or intentionally misrepresented, concealed or withheld facts in order to redeem benefits.

Process Form: Missing Signature Benefits

Farmer Number: _____

Use this form to document contact with the local WIC clinic. If the participant does not respond within 10 days, send this form and the benefit (check) to the State WIC office to be reviewed for approval.

Benefit Number	Contact Person At Local WIC Clinic	Date of Contact with Local Clinic	Date Sent to State Office

Process Form: Missing Signature Benefits

Farmer Number: _____

Use this form to document contact with the local WIC clinic. If the participant does not respond within 10 days, send this form and the benefit (check) to the State WIC office to be reviewed for approval.

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